



Del Bene
PRODUCE

Market Update

For the week ending January 12th, 2019

SUGGESTED BUYS:

Avocados, brussels sprouts, pea pods, grape tomatoes, blueberries, beets, hard squash, blackberries, blueberries

TIGHT AND EXPENSIVE:

Collard and mustard greens, celery, all peppers, yellow grape tomatoes, round tomatoes, strawberries, cantaloupe, figs

NEW ON MARKET:

Apricots, peaches, nectarines, sweet cherries, kumquats, pomelo, satsuma mandarins, minneola, honey bell tangerines

AVOCADOS: MARKET STEADY

There continues to be plentiful supplies crossing over from Mexico despite scaled back picking schedules over the holidays. Quality remains excellent and the weather in the main growing region of Mexico has been consistently in the 80s with no rain. Supply levels are expected to drop slightly as we progress into January, which will bump up price levels. California is on schedule to begin harvesting by the end of the month.

BERRIES: Blueberries, Blackberries, and Strawberries – MARKETS DOWN

Strawberries – As the strong holiday demand falls off, so will prices throughout the industry. Prices should gradually fall over the weeks to come, but the growing areas in California (Oxnard and Santa Maria) have been hit with three consecutive days of cold temperatures with freeze watches taking effect at night. Santa Maria has reportedly been hit the hardest with plants already past their prime, damaged by frost. Mexico will pick up production throughout January as long as weather cooperates. Florida is slowly recovering from poor weather and is getting steady (although lighter) production.

Blueberries – Prices have dropped because of product coming from multiple different growing regions: Chile and Mexico being the major contributors. Argentina and Peru are also shipping moderate supplies. Steady supplies are expected to continue over the short term with reasonable prices and very good quality. Prices will fluctuate slightly from week to week depending on availability.

Blackberries – Blackberry production has been limited lately because of cooler temperatures and rain in Mexico along with delayed picking schedules because of the holidays. Prices are expected to hold steady (at best) or possibly increase as we get into January with production yields potentially being hampered by the inclement weather. Quality on incoming product has been very good.

Raspberries – Mexico is currently the main growing area for raspberries. Quality has been good with adequate shelf life as long as storage temperature is maintained. Prices are stronger due to colder temperatures slowing fruit growth. Some growers have communicated concerns over potential quality issues resulting from precipitation, but that remains to be seen. Prices should hover around current levels for the month of January.

PEPPERS: Green Bell - MARKET UP

Green Bell – Growers in Florida are still battling below average yields; mostly because of cold/rainy weather over the past month. There have also been light volumes out west and now a freeze late last week is having a negative impact on peppers and many other types of vegetables. Growers are assessing any potential damage to the crops, but colder than average temperatures continue to affect sizing and harvest volumes.

Colored Bell – Demand continues to exceed supplies for red, yellow, and orange bell peppers. There are very limited supplies available from Mexico shipping from Arizona. Higher prices will stretch into January with cooler weather affecting sizing and color of the peppers. New growing districts are expected to increase production within the first two weeks of the New Year.

LETTUCE: Leaf lettuce - MARKET DOWN

Iceberg – Colder than average temperatures in Yuma, AZ and southern California are affecting crop yields and picking schedules. Harvesting crews are being forced to start their days later because of ice on the lettuce plants. The market is holding relatively steady for the time being, but we could see increased price levels from lower supply levels as a result of the colder temperatures. Plus, forecast is calling for more the same next week. Labor shortages are also lingering with several different growers having a difficult time finding crews to harvest daily.

Leaf/Romaine – Green leaf, Red leaf, and butter lettuce availability is improving with prices adjusting downward. Romaine and romaine heart supplies are plentiful and available at reasonable prices. Overall quality on leafy items has been fair with some occasional tip burn being reported, which is an effect from the colder temperatures that the product is being grown in. Supplies are expected to hold steady over the next week.

TOMATOES: Round and Grape – MARKETS DOWN

The Palmetto/Ruskin districts of Florida continue to be the main growing area for the eastern portion of the country. They are now entering their third and fourth picks of the season. Fields are continuing to be rotated in efforts to meet demand and prepare for the winter season. Rainy and cold weather in Florida has been the story, limiting overall production. If there were any significant overall demand right now, we would see higher prices. Immokalee/Naples will not have any serious volume to contribute for another 1-2 weeks. Roma supplies are improving, however, with increasing supplies from Mexico helping the market drop.

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